

Message Text

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47

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9599

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

USMISSION GENEVA

USEC BRUSSELS 399

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PINS, IN

SUBJ: INTUC PLEDGES SUPPORT TO MRS GANDHI

1. IN A NATIONAL RADIO BROADCAST JUNE 29 THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS-R'S INTUC LABOR CONFEDERATION, B.C. BHAGAVATI, CALLED ON THE WORKING CLASS TO "RALLY ROUND THE PRIME MINISTER." HE SAID THAT THERE WAS A "FACIST THREAT POSED BY THE JOINT FRONT OF COMMUNAL, CAPITALIST, AND LEFT ADVENTURIST PARTIES." THE "INITIAL RESPONSE OF THE WORKERS TO THE EMERGENCY IN THE LAST THREE DAYS HAS INDEED BEEN COMMENDABLE. THEY HAVE KEPT THE WHEELS OF

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INDUSTRIAL, MINERAL AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION MOVING."

BHAGAVATI CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO "MAKE DEMOCRACY MEANINGFUL FOR THE TOILING MASSES BY TAKING RADICAL ECONOMIC MEASURES." HE LISTED AS ESSENTIAL THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FAIR COMMODITIES DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM, IMPLEMENTATION OF LAND CEILING LAWS, FAIR WAGES, TERMINATION OF THE ANTI-INFLATIONARY MEASURES REQUIRING THE FORCED SAVING OF WAGE INCREASES, AND AN EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME.

2. IN A MEETING WITH THE LABOR COUNSELOR, BHAGAVATI SAID THAT THE INTUC WOULD EXERCISE RESTRAINT AND EMPHASIZE ITS OBLIGATION TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY DURING THE EMERGENCY PERIOD. THE GOVERNMENT, HE ADDED, WOULD HAVE TO BE FORTHCOMING AS INTUC-GOI COOPERATION WAS "A TWO-WAY STREET." THE LABOR MINISTER HAS CALLED A MEETING WITH THE UNIONS WHICH BHAGAVATI SAID WOULD BE ATTENDED ONLY BY INTUC. THERE WAS NO POINT IN HIS MEETING WITH THE OTHERS AT THIS TIME, HE SAID. THE INTUC LEADER MADE NO MENTION OF THE CPI'S AITUC CONFEDERATION WHICH IS ALSO SUPPORTING THE PRIME MINISTER.

3. BHAGAVATI, A CONGRESS-R MP, PREDICTED THAT THERE WOULD BE A RETURN TO PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND ELECTIONS AFTER THE GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN ABLE TO SHOW SOME PROGRESS ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, BUT PROVIDED THERE WAS POLITICAL QUIET. HE WOULD NOT INDICATE HOW LONG THAT MIGHT TAKE.

4. COMMENT: THERE NEVER WAS ANY DOUBT THAT THE INTUC, AT LEAST AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, WOULD DO THE PRIME MINISTER'S BIDDING IN THE PRESENT CRISIS. THE FIRST PROOF OF ITS DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL WAS THE CALLING-OFF OF A STRIKE OF 650,000 STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD WORKERS SCHEDULED FOR JULY 14. (THE AITUC WAS A JOINT SPONSOR OF THE STRIKE, AND IT HAS ALSO CANCELLED ITS STRIKE CALL.) AS FOR BHAGAVATI'S DEMAND THAT THE GOI BE RESPONSIVE TO LABOR'S NEEDS IN RETURN FOR ITS COOPERATION, WE CONSIDER THIS RHETORICAL. WE EXPECT THAT THE GOI WILL PROMULGATE NEW MEASURES TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMY, BUT THAT EVEN IN THE ABSENCE OF SUCH MEASURES, MRS GANDHI CAN COUNT ON THE LOYALTY OF THE INTUC. BHAGAVATI TOLD THE LABOR COUNSELOR THAT HE EXPECTED THAT SOME FOREIGN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LABOR MOVEMENTS WOULD PROBABLY NOT UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION IN INDIA LEADING TO THE CURTAILMENT OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS. HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY RIGHT. SAXBE

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